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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION - DEFENSE MINISTER KYUMA'S

REMARKS - TOKYO

LEAD STORIES: Most Thursday morning papers front-paged an agreement Wednesday at the meeting in Tokyo of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas to cut catches of bluefin tunas in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean by 23 percent over four years through 2010.

¶1. "The Responsibility of Defense Minister Kyuma" Guest commentator Naoyuki Agawa, a Keio University professor and former minister at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, wrote in the conservative Sankei (2/1): "...Meeting the press on January 24 at the Japan National Press Club in Tokyo, Defense Minister Kyuma made remarks critical of President Bush's decision to launch the Iraq war. Kyuma also criticized Bush for failing to come up with plans to bring an end to the chaos in that country.... Kyuma is neither a scholar nor a commentator. He is in charge of Japan's national defense, which rests upon the US-Japan security system. His criticism of a decision made by the president of Japan's closest ally thus carries unusual weight. Japan, of course, does not necessarily support every US policy.... But when it comes to key US policies, particularly on issues that directly concern Tokyo, Japan as an ally should voice support as a matter of courtesy.... That was why although the Koizumi cabinet had counseled caution prior to the opening of the Iraq war, it offered support to the Bush administration once the decision was made.... The Bush administration never - not even once - publicly rebuked then PM Koizumi when he was the target of criticism from China and South Korea for his visits to Yasukuni Shrine. Had then Defense Secretary Rumsfeld said that the prime minister should

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not visit the shrine, how would Japan have reacted? US-Japan relations would have been badly damaged. Kyuma has made very serious remarks that could shake the foundation of trust between the two allies, including his criticism of the US regarding the relocation of MCAS Futenma."

SCHIEFFER